REMOTE STORAGE

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The Awakening of Harrisburg

Some Account of the Improvement Movement Begun in 1902; with the Progress of the Work to the End of 1906

By J. HORACE MCFARLAND
President of the American Civic Association

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The Awakening of Harrisburg

BY J. HORACE McFARLAND
President American Civic Association, Secretary Municipal League of Harrisburg

THE capital city of Pennsylvania, with unusual advantages of geographical situation, and surrounded by much natural beauty of river and mountain, island and valley, had pursued the even tenor of its growth in wealth and population for something over a century, with but little thought of esthetic development. To the problems of water-supply, street paving, sewage disposal and the other questions that must beset congestion of population, only incidental attention had been paid, without any comprehensive view of the situation or any attempt to provide adequately for the future.

In the course of time, individual citizens began to make comment on the failure of the town to measure up to the more agreeable conditions found in other municipalities, and numberless plans were proposed for improvement. As usual with such propositions, their most useful effect was in creating discussion, for it is seldom that the citizens of any community will agree to adopt as best the plans or suggestions of other members of the same community. "A prophet is not without honor, save in his own country."

Miss Dock's Address.

It may fairly be said that the real improvement of Harrisburg began with an illustrated talk on "The City Beautiful," presented December 20, 1900, by Miss Mira Lloyd Dock, before a large number of Harrisburg citizens gathered in the Board of Trade auditorium. Miss Dock, one of the energetic founders of the Civic Club, had long been a prophet of improvement. She now showed pictorially the disgusting civic conditions in Harrisburg, contrasting these with enlightened conditions elsewhere. Hundreds of citizens then realized, for the first time, that a rarely beautiful river bank was not the best place for a public dump, and that a modern city owes its inhabitants, in return for taxation, something more than police protection, typhoid-laden water, imperfect sewerage, dirty and unpaved streets, and deficient park and playground facilities.

The smoking spark of municipal betterment was by this lecture fanned into a flame. The newspapers gave constant attention to the more outbreaking nuisances in the city, and talk, more talk, and yet more talk, followed.

Mr. Reynders' Proposition.

Definite progress began when, on May 3, 1901, Mr. J. V. W. Reynders, an active business man, a noted bridge engineer, and, best of all, a good citizen, published a letter in the Harrisburg "Telegraph," reciting the futility of mere talk, saying that money should be appropriated by the councils for the obtaining of expert advice upon the Harrisburg difficulties and their remedies, and proposing that if the city councils could not or would not provide the funds, he would be the first contributor of $100 to a fund of $5,000 for this purpose. This suggestion was strongly approved, and, as it was followed by Mr. Reynders' energetic personal effort, the subscription required was completed in ten days. It came from sixty persons, and is notable because of its amount relative to the city's population and wealth, and relative to the unselfishness of the subscription, which was really for the purpose of discovering how these same citizens might tax themselves for doing better by the town. To do as well in proportion, New York would need to raise in ten days more than $400,000 for a local public purpose not connected with any charity; Chicago about $200,000, and Philadelphia just a little less. Yet, as will be noted, Harrisburg's citizens doubled the $5,000 within barely six months.

A meeting and organization of those who had subscribed this fund followed. The remarkable condition appeared that the city's more conservative and phlegmatic citizens were now become its most progressive residents. The Harrisburg League for Municipal Improvements was formed, and an Executive Committee was charged with the duty of obtaining expert advice, and with power to expend the $5,000. The mayor, the city engineer, and a representative from each branch of the city councils were invited to act with this committee, thus securing semi-official coöperation, and recognizing the existing political conditions.

Selection of Experts.

After careful and painstaking inquiry, this Executive Committee retained three eminent engineers: Mr. James H. Fuertes, of New York, to report upon the sewerage and filtration problems; Mr. Warren H.

Manning, of Boston, to formulate plans for parks; and Mr. M. R. Sherrerd, of Newark, New Jersey, to report upon the question of paving. These gentlemen promptly took up the work assigned, and during September, 1901, three comprehensive reports, supplemented by numerous detailed drawings and diagrams, were presented to the Executive Committee.

It was discovered that Harrisburg's debt could be increased by $1,090,000, upon consent of the voters, under the constitutional provision limiting the debt to seven per cent of the assessed valuation. It was also discovered with very great satisfaction by the Executive Committee that the recommendations of the engineers, with but slight modification, could be carried out within the city's resources.

The reports of the engineers, with the essential maps and diagrams, and a concise summary and recommendation by the Executive Committee, were published in pamphlet form. This pamphlet, entitled "Proposed Municipal Improvements for Harrisburg, Pennsylvania," has long been out of print, though in constant and urgent demand by the many other municipalities which are following the example of Harrisburg.

It should be noted that this movement was entirely unofficial up to this time. To become effective, the consent of the citizens was required to the proposed increase of debt,—that consent to be obtained through an election ordered by the city councils for the purpose. Harrisburg was not without those citizens who cannot see beyond the penny upon which their eyes are always focused, and it also had a large number of inhabitants who were properly conservative and required to know what the money was to be used for, and how, before voting for additional loans.

Safeguarding the Work.

It was realized, therefore, that if this effort was to succeed, the people must be fully informed as to the proposed improvements, and convinced that it was wise to enter upon the expenditure required. A prevailing fear that the money might be misspent was also considered and completely dissipated by the preparation and passage of an ordinance—introduced with the ordinance authorizing the election to determine upon the loan—creating a Board of Public Works, charged with the expenditure of most of the money involved in the loan. These ordinances were pressed to immediate passage, and three citizens of

ability, integrity and high standing, universally satisfactory to the people, were appointed as this Board of Public Works, long in advance of having a dollar to expend or any work to do. That is, before the vote was taken, the people in Harrisburg knew who was to spend the money they were asked to vote.

To promote knowledge amongst the people as to the advisability of the large increase in the public debt proposed, an additional fund of $5,000 was raised, the total of both funds, indeed, amounting to $10,221.55, of which 90 per cent was contributed by the sixty citizens who pay nearly one-eighth of the taxes in the city. This, as previously mentioned, is equivalent to a subscription of over $800,000 in New York city.

The preliminary organization was now made permanent, with the name of the Municipal League of Harrisburg, under a simple but model constitution. Surely Harrisburg might now lay claim to having awakened!

The Campaign of Education.

The Executive Committee of the League and its sub-committees now planned a comprehensive and somewhat sensational campaign of education. An abridged edition of the report of the engineers was prepared under the direction of a Press Committee, which committee also was charged with the duty of presenting a carefully progressive series of arguments through the three daily papers each day of the six weeks' campaign. These daily papers, it should be noted, gave most freely and fully of their space, influence and help to this movement, without which help success could not have been attained. Through a corps of paid distributors, chosen from among the high-school boys, two from each voting precinct of the city, a progressively argumentative series of documents, tracts and appeals was placed in every house in the city twice each week during the campaign.

A Committee on Meetings arranged for public gatherings in various parts of the city, at which were presented, through the stereopticon and by the voice of eloquent speakers, the various plans and propositions involved, as well as pictorial representations of the unpleasant conditions it was hoped to correct. Headquarters were opened in the business center of the town, and a courteous attendant there explained the proposed improvements, showed the diagrams and handed literature to all callers.

A Committee on Coöperation wrote to every clergyman in the

Pennsylvania Railroad Bridge, just above Harrisburg, over the beautiful Susquehanna River
(See page 5)

Beeches in Wetzel's Swamp, now included in the new park system as part of Wildwood Park
(See pages 8 and 10)

The shores of the Susquehanna within the city's limits, showing unsanitary beach—1902

North Front Street, on the bank of the Susquehanna, in 1902. An unpleasant dump was close by on the river-bank; it has since been improved and a park established. The street has been paved with asphalt, with a grass-plot on the right.

Street-car used to awaken voters before and on election day (1902). (See page 11)

South Front Street, showing on right Riverside Park. The street is paved with asphalt, and there is a grass-plot on the left.—1906

A school-house in Harrisburg, 1902, showing the style of tree-trimming then approved, as well as the older school architecture

The "Lincoln" school building in Harrisburg, completed 1905. Note central grass-plot in street

(See page 18)

city, urging his support through the preaching of at least two sermons upon the gospel of municipal cleanliness, and a competent speaker explained the plans of improvement to the Ministerial Association at an assigned meeting. The clergymen responded, as they always do to every proper effort, and three-fourths of the pulpits rang with this gospel of civic decency before the day of election. The Catholic bishop of the diocese issued a letter urging his parishioners to support the improvement loan, and the Jewish rabbi joined in the movement. Every organization in the city, of whatever nature, was addressed and furnished with arguments and literature.

Opposition Manifested.

While the newspapers and the more progressive business men were earnestly supporting this movement, there was not wanting a substratum of active and vigorous opposition, in one case emphasizing itself in a house-to-house canvass against the improvement movement. Some landlords threatened a large increase in rents if the loan was voted, and just how this threat reacted in favor of the movement will be shown later.

In the first arousing meeting held in the Court House, which was thronged, as well as in the subsequent meetings in various parts of the city, we threw upon the screen the ordinance, showing the legal form of the loan which the people were asked to approve, so that there could be no misrepresentation. (See third cover page.)

Improving Sewers.

One of the essential features of this comprehensive and coördinated plan of improvement, including water filtration, sewer extension, street paving and a park system, was the alteration of the city's sewage disposal system and the improvement of its sewers. Five miles above the city, the Susquehanna river breaks through the low hills which in primeval days held in check its waters, in a beautiful gap, now spanned by the largest stone railroad bridge in the world, erected by the Pennsylvania railroad. The driveway along the clean and beautiful east bank of the Susquehanna toward the city showed nothing but encouraging conditions until civilization was encountered within the city limits, where billboards, dumps and the stony and sewage-encrusted beach of the river took the place of native trees and grassy banks. In the meetings held, pictures of these dumps and billboards always brought a gasp of surprise from citizens

who had grown to accept them as inevitable, but were thus caused to realize for the first time their nastiness. A beautiful line of Norway maples in bloom right near the city's pumping station was contrasted with the unpleasant conditions of the river-bank adjacent, and then a cartoon showing old John Harris, presumed to be holding his nose as he revisited the once green banks of the river along which lies the city he founded, brought the laugh which always helps the assimilation of disagreeable information.

The problem of a pure water supply was of the greatest importance to Harrisburg. Drinking unfiltered Susquehanna river water after it had received the sewage of twenty-four cities and towns, with 522,799 population, it was not to be wondered at that the typhoid fever statistics were disgracefully alarming.

We showed graphically that smallpox and diphtheria were innocent diseases compared with the less feared typhoid fever, and that a radical increase in the percentage of typhoid cases was occurring each year. Taking into account the fact that all deaths from typhoid fever in excess of six in the one hundred thousand are insisted by sanitary experts to be simply municipal murder, we showed that Harrisburg, which could without fault answer for three deaths per year, had killed in the preceding year twenty-four persons beyond the proper limit.

Unfiltered Water.

At this point in the illustrated addresses it was the custom to

SMALLPOX—DUE TO INFECTION AND DIRT
In 1901—103 cases reported—1 death

DIPHTHERIA—DUE TO INFECTION AND DIRT
In 1901—117 cases reported—13 deaths

TYPHOID FEVER—98 per cent due to drinking UNFILTERED river water
In 1901—211 cases reported—27 deaths

Thus TYPHOID FEVER, a preventable disease, due to sewage-laden water, in 1901 killed TWICE as many as Diphtheria, and 27 times as many as the dreaded Smallpox

VOTE THE ANTI-TYPHOID TICKET

Lantern-slide used in the campaign of education—1902

throw on the screen a great interrogation mark, and to ask for questions. They came, and sometimes in no friendly fashion! At one of the meetings, held in a section of the city most hostile to the movement, in a cold hall, one cold January night, with a still colder audience, a man who had been following the lecturer about the city and fomenting covert opposition, blurted out with the query when the interrogation mark came on, "Do you know, sir, that there are five hundred thousand bacteria in a cubic inch of milk?" The lecturer assured him that he had not recently counted the bacteria, and that we were not discussing milk, adding the return question, "Do you know how the bacteria got into the milk?" It was answered by a loud-voiced gentleman at the rear of the room, seemingly inspired by Providence to say, "Because the cows drink unfiltered Susquehanna river water!" The laugh which followed raised the temperature of the room, though it did not silence the objector, who returned to the charge by saying that this talk about bad water was all nonsense; that he had used the water for years; that it was good water, and that typhoid fever was not caused by it. He was then accused by the lecturer of having a filter in his own house, which he admitted, unwisely adding, "But it cost only $1.85." The lecturer instantly seized the opportunity by shaming this man (a large property-owner, with his money invested in real estate rented at high prices) for thus securing the little trickle of partially pure water he cared for himself at a cost of $1.85, while for less than two dollars taxation on the thousand of valuation he could help to give all the people all the pure water they needed, not only to drink but to bathe in! The man's opposition was nullified by the hilarity which followed this animated exchange of question and answer, and the improvement temperature of the room became quite tolerable. The speaker was not again thus annoyed.

Questions Asked.

In addition to furnishing the water which Harrisburg drank unfiltered, the broad Susquehanna river, fronting the length of the city, received the sewage of the city, turned into it by means of many sewers, the outfalls of which caused an intolerable nuisance at the low stages of the river prevailing in the summer months. Mr. Fuertes' plan involved the erection near the southern limit of the city, at a favorable point, of a low dam, in order to maintain a constant minimum

The Sanitary Dam.

height of water in front of the city, thus covering the sewer outfalls, providing by sluiceways for the rapid disposal of the sewage, and also affording delightful boating facilities through the slack water which would thus take the place of the strong current existing. This proposed dam aroused much opposition in the part of the city nearest to which it was to be erected. It also introduced a little element of humor, for the lecturer who explained its plan and location was gravely assured at several meetings that a dam four and a half feet high would inevitably cause a rise in the water level of that many feet, even in a twenty-foot flood! The engineer's diagrams were used to combat this error, backed up by an actual instance produced from a river in India in which a dam had been erected under similar conditions. These arguments proved convincing, and while the dam, it may be said in passing, has not yet been built, the money is assigned for its erection, and when certain legislative difficulties are removed it will undoubtedly be built.

The Paxton Creek Nuisance.

A serious menace to the health of Harrisburg existed through the turning of the sewage of about two-fifths of the city's population into Paxton Creek, a small stream running parallel to the course of the Susquehanna river, east of the low ridge serving as a backbone to the city. Paxton Creek, flowing through a beautiful natural park known at the beginning of this improvement movement as Wetzel's Swamp, but now much more appropriately entitled Wildwood Park, was an altogether clean and sightly stream until it flowed into civilization, where the usual adornment of dump, filth and liquid wastes changed it into a foul open sewer. The pictures following this stream through its woodland course into the city, and giving in large detail the dumps, sewer outfalls and filth, so far as these could be represented by the camera (the stench being unphotographable!), invariably produced a sensation when shown. The fact thus impressed that, while Paxton Creek could receive at low water without damage to health the sewage of a thousand people, it was receiving all the time the sewage of twenty thousand, strongly enforced the vital importance of this part of the improvement work.

The engineer's plan for remedying this trouble included the erection of a great intercepting sewer paralleling Paxton Creek and receiving all but the flood-water discharge of the section of the city draining into it. He also provided for the improving of the channel

of the creek, so that it would become a clean and wholesome stream. This work has been completely accomplished, and the intercepting sewer has been in successful service for more than two years. The improvement in the appearance of Paxton Creek is most noticeable.

Inadequate Parks.

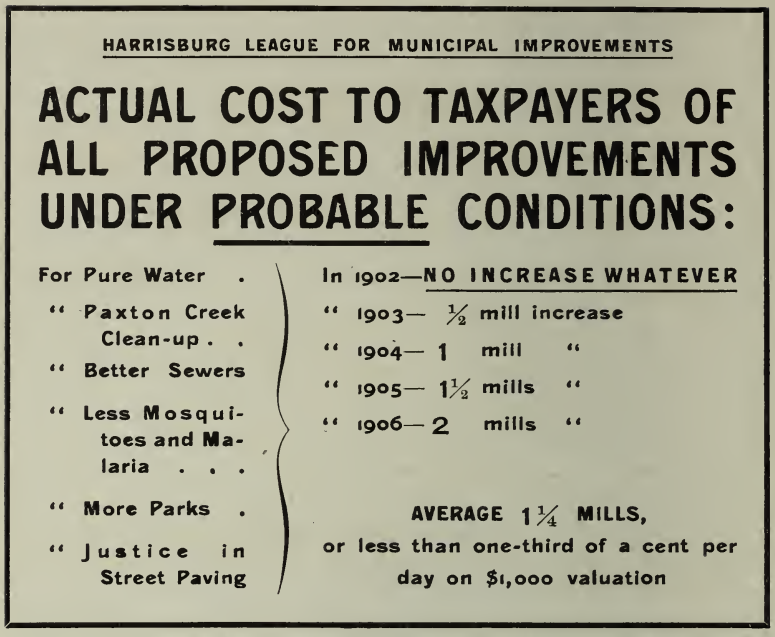
Harrisburg had a most inadequate park provision at the inception of this movement, as has before been suggested. Setting aside the unkept and irregular strip of grass along the river front, sometimes edging an unpleasant dump, and the little Capitol Park of sixteen acres, mostly taken up by the buildings of the state administration, Reservoir Park, of less than twenty-five acres, inconveniently situated more than a mile from the center of the city, afforded the only recreation spot. Of playgrounds there were none, save as the ladies of the city had temporarily converted several of the unpleasant school-yards into summer playgrounds, maintained for a short time only. When the pictures of these playgrounds were shown to people, contrasted with an orchard view close to one of the schools—but separated from it by a barbed-wire fence—there was no difficulty in noting the desire of all the people for adequate park and playground facilities.

Billboards and Poles.

In this connection, some little attention was paid to the crowded streets of the city, to the telegraph poles which line its highways, and to the billboards which sometimes hide beautiful vistas. In one particular case, a billboard of a most offensive character shut out the view of a tract of land proposed in Mr. Manning's plan to be taken as a small park. When the question was asked, "Which do you prefer, the trees on the banks or the billboards on the streets?" there was always a shout of "Trees!"

Tree Butchers.

Attention was also paid to the mutilation of existing trees on the city streets, through the operations of so-called "tree trimmers," who are usually nothing but ignorant butchers. A picture showing one of these butchers in the act of ruining a good tree was most effective, and it is a significant commentary on the work thus undertaken to know that one of these men whose living was made ready by ruining trees has recently broken into the public prints with a two-column stream of abuse of the man who called attention to his acts of mutilation, and who, he says, is interfering with his "business."



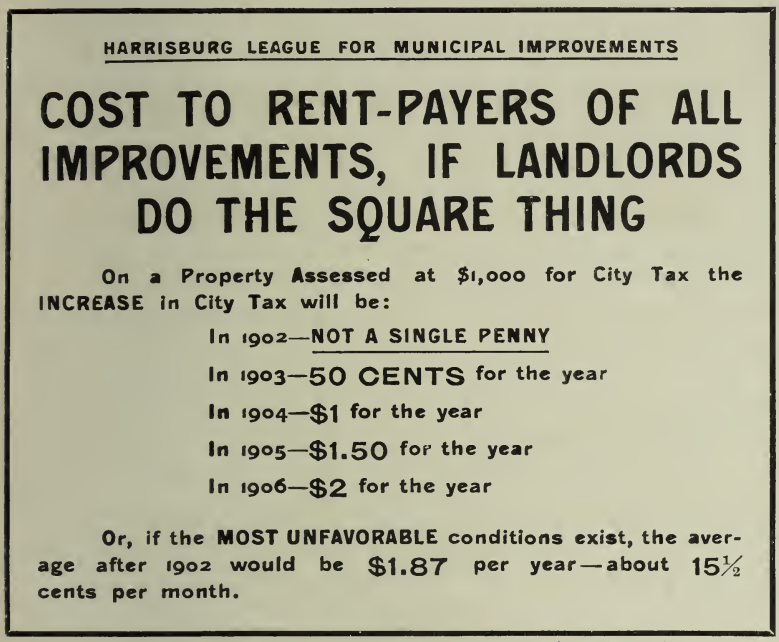
Lantern slide used in campaign of education. The tax-rate increase for 1907 was one-half mill LESS than the promise for 1906

The lack in Harrisburg of public bathing facilities was touched upon in this campaign, and later, with the result of creating a strong desire for the establishment of public baths.

Paving and Public Baths.

The need for street paving in Harrisburg required but little discussion, for all were cognizant of it. True, we had one or two paved streets, but the seldom-swept asphalt, thickly coated with mud and filth, had long been lost to view.

When entering this campaign, it had been my personal contention with the Executive Committee that I should have permission to enlarge upon the necessity for parks. My excellent associates were not convinced either of the absolute necessity for parks or of the advisability of pressing the park movement among the people. Declining to do the work upon any other basis than that of giving full importance to the provision of proper outdoor recreation facilities, I was permitted to have my way. The presentation of our park needs to the people soon justified itself absolutely; for in some parts of the city in which little attention could be secured to matters of



Lantern-slides used in the campaign of education. (See page 12)

sewerage, filtration and paving, the appeal of near-by green trees and grassy lawns, located where tired mothers might give their children the recreation due to every American child, was noticeably strong. The park propaganda became a strong element in obtaining favor.

I have mentioned before the possibility of a great natural park, known at the time this movement began as Wetzel's Swamp, and esteemed by most of the citizens of Harrisburg to be a boggy neighborhood, available only as a burial-place for deceased domestic animals and as a resort for tramps. Only a few of us knew that this "swamp," inserted, as it were, into the very center of what must be the future city of Harrisburg, was one of the greatest potentialities in America for a superb natural park. Mr. Manning had enthusiastically advocated the including of all of it, so as to provide here a park of over five hundred acres in the city's system. Very little of the land included was used for agricultural purposes, and, at first laughed at, the proposition soon became a most important adjunct to our improvement propaganda. As pictures were shown indicating the beauties

"Wetzel's Swamp."

of this natural park,—with its great trees, grassy roads and pleasant open spaces; with its succession of wild flowers, from the hepatica in earliest spring, through the time of violets, dogwoods, redbuds, irises, marshmallows, and other members of the rich flora of Central Pennsylvania, to the close of the blooming season with the witch hazel's defiance of the frost,—a strong desire was evident to possess this land for the good of all. It required little argument to show the advisability of taking as park territory land in which great trees of the oak, maple, tulip and ash were already matured.

Cost of Improvements.

But after all this appeal, it was absolutely necessary to discuss each time the question of economics. This the Executive Committee had foreseen, and a statement had been secured from the city treasurer and a city controller, showing the actual probable increase of taxation for five years, under favorable conditions and under unfavorable conditions. These statements were thrown upon the screen, accompanied by one showing the cost to rent-payers of all improvements, "if landlords did the square thing."

Just here may be mentioned the fact that the chief opposition to the improvement loan came from the landlords of the humbler houses, rented at relatively high figures. In some cases the landlords had taken time by the forelock and had raised rents from one to two dollars per month as soon as the improvements were suggested, and long before the election which was to decide as to whether or not they should be effected! Inasmuch as it was shown that the increase in rents should average but one dollar per year on a property assessed at a thousand dollars, this arbitrary action on the part of the landlords reacted in favor of improvements. Many rent-payers said, "If we are to be taxed anyway, we might as well have the improvements, and we will vote for them." It was soon made obvious that the increase in rents was due to the growth of the city, and to the operations of law of supply and demand rather than to any probable increase of taxation.

The campaign I have outlined was waged with the utmost vigor from the 1st of January to the 18th of February. There was "something doing" every day, and the seven Executive Committeemen, all of them active business men, were assisted by many others who gave time and effort to this movement which promised so much for the city. The ladies of the Civic Club were of very great

assistance. Through their agency a simple and admirable gospel of improvement was read to 8,000 school children in the various public schools, and by this action the truth reached many homes otherwise closed to it.

As the campaign worked to a finish, the public meetings fostered civic enthusiasm in addition to promoting civic education. The last meeting in the Court House, addressed by the governor of the state, two eloquent clergymen, a senator and a business man, was designed to arouse strongly the local patriotism of the citizens. Our slogan in these last weeks was "Don't give your own town a black eye," and this we emblazoned on both sides of a trolley car kindly provided by the Traction Company, which was run all of the Monday preceding the election up and down the city streets. The novelty of this method of campaigning was enhanced by the big and noisy hand-organ kept going inside the car.

Appeal to Civic Pride.

Hating billboards, we used them, nevertheless, at the end of this campaign, for displaying great posters urging a vote for improvements. Late on the Saturday night preceding the election, a four-page paper entitled "The Harrisburg Plan" was placed in every house. By arrangement, most of the pulpits in the town preached civic improvement the next day, and for once real politics and real religion combined in a most admirable effort to create better conditions on earth as a preparation for the world to come.

A perplexing political situation faced those in charge of this movement. A mayor, a city treasurer and a city controller were to be elected at the same time that the vote was to be taken upon the million-dollar loan. Harrisburg, naturally a Republican city, was under the administration of a Democratic mayor, whose interest in the real welfare of the city was dubious. An admirable Republican city controller desired reëlection, and the Democratic city treasurer, just as capable, was also a candidate. The Republican candidate for mayor had been proposed by the same machine which had brought about the election of the existing inefficient Democratic mayor. This Republican candidate, while personally of good character, was weak, boss-controlled, and would not pronounce for the improvements, or for anything in particular. One of the heartiest supporters of the improvement movement, a wealthy young Democrat of the

The Political Situation.

highest character who had been doing splendid service in the Common Council of the city, had been nominated by his party for the mayoralty.

Inasmuch as partisan lines were rather strongly drawn in Harrisburg, the Municipal League could not directly endorse any of these candidates. A careful block system for the fostering of the loan vote had been established, and it was hoped that the people would be able to distinguish for themselves the necessity of electing an administration of an advanced character.

A Complete Victory.

The result of the election was everything that could be asked. Out of a total vote of 11,039, the million-dollar loan received a majority of 3,590. The mayor we wanted, Vance C. McCormick, was elected by 2,566, though a Democrat in a Republican city, with the full power of the "machine" against him. The efficient and upright Republican city controller and the Democratic city treasurer were both elected by majorities closely approximating those received by Mayor McCormick. This time, it will be seen, the people were selecting *men*, regardless of partisan politics! Indeed, they even took the best three out of six candidates for city assessors, including two Republicans and one Democrat.

Five Years After.

So much for the situation on February 19, 1902. Full five years have now elapsed, and the city administration has necessarily been changed. There has been ample time for the impulse for improvement to sink into the old-time apathy of indifferent citizenship.

It is therefore with intense satisfaction that I briefly detail the present status of the various movements thus inaugurated in what was probably the first concrete and comprehensive campaign for municipal advancement ever undertaken in America. I do not wish to be misunderstood in this statement, for the volume of improvements involved is not so great, compared with the many millions spent in the larger cities. It is the method employed: that of engaging expert advice for the preparation of a concrete plan so that all the needs of the town might be met through a coincidently proceeding and harmoniously interlocking plan of improvements, that challenges attention. With filtration incomplete and typhoid murders yet proceeding in Philadelphia after many years of effort, with wealthy

Pittsburg drinking raw typhoid-laden water, with the inadequacy of even great Boston in some respects, with the limited success of spasmodic improvement movements in many other cities, it is distinctly the most important part of this story to call attention to the entire and unqualified success of this, the first movement undertaken upon a harmoniously complete and definite plan.

The McCormick Administration.

The administration of Mayor McCormick was a revelation. The city was cleaned up, morally and physicially, as fast as this active young man could bring it about. Sacrificing important business interests to do the hard, arduous work of his office, he called into consultation constantly the best citizens of the town. No man was appointed to office who was not competent, and those retained in office were given to understand that efficiency was their only backing, inasmuch as the "pull" had gone out of business! The police department was completely reorganized. The highway department was also placed upon a business footing, and within the time of Mayor McCormick's administration, but three short years, Harrisburg had the satisfaction of becoming one of the cleanest cities in the United States; for its twenty-two miles of paved streets are swept every day the year round, and the excellent asphalt pavements are really visible at all times.

Under this same highway department, the $100,000 involved in the million-dollar loan for the payment of the cost of paving street intersections was combined with more than a million dollars realized by assessing abutting properties, so that the paved area of the city has increased, as I have stated, to twenty-two miles, all kept clean.

Another Loan Voted.

So changed has the attitude toward paving become in the city, that another loan has recently been voted by the people to pay for paving more intersections. This has permitted the making of contracts to increase the area of Harrisburg's paved streets to more than forty-five miles.

Successful Paving.

Under a capable organization through the city engineer's department, and under the vigilant eye of the mayor, the competition for street paving resulted in unusually low rates, proposed by the two largest asphalt paving concerns. What these concerns expected to deliver I do not know. What they did deliver to the city I do know, for the inspection bureau, organized under the direction of the mayor, backed

up by expert investigation paid for by the Municipal League, kept them down rigidly to the specifications, also prepared by the Municipal League's expert. The paving that we have had laid down is good paving, and the city has been well served at a low rate.

The Gross Administration.

The test of the temper of the city came at the expiration of the term of Mayor McCormick, he being ineligible for reëlection under the Pennsylvania constitution. The "machine" was again in evidence in the effort of the previous objectionable mayor to be reëlected, every one knowing that his reëlection meant a return to the former "wide-open" conditions. He made a desperately active personal canvass, but was defeated by Edward Z. Gross, the Republican candidate, representing the progress and the decency of the city. I can say of him that he has continued and extended the admirable administration of his predecessor. An active business man, he yet gives most of his time to the city affairs, and regards himself, as he should, as the head of the city's administration, and not as a mere perfunctory and relatively ornamental official.

Pure Water Supplied.

The matter of the sewerage problem and the filtration of the water had, preceding the election of February 18, 1902, been placed in charge of the Board of Public Works, including, as I have before said, three admirable citizens. The city councils promptly passed the necessary legislation to enable this Board to get to work. It selected the same excellent engineer, Mr. James H. Fuertes, and it has completed its work, except for the erection of the drainage dam (prevented by legislative difficulties) most successfully. Filtered water was served to the city beginning October, 1905, and thus in but a little over three years from its organization this Board, after making for six months exhaustive tests of the water of the Susquehanna, followed with the installation of a modern filtration plant able to supply from nine to twelve million gallons a day of pure, clear, sparkling water, in place of the muddy, culm-mixed and typhoid-polluted fluid previously served to our defenceless citizens. Careful daily bacteriological examination of the filtered water is maintained.

The Intercepting Sewer.

As previously mentioned, the great intercepting sewer has been completed, and a number of other main sewers have been added to the city's drainage system. Its term expiring, and several of its able members declining

Work proceeding on line of Cameron Parkway, along Spring Creek.—1906

Wetzel's Swamp or Wildwood Park grass road. This indicates the beauty of this natural playground

Outdoor gymnasium and wading pool at Twelfth Street Playground.—1906

Riverside Park, North Front Street. In the circle is the "Depressed Path" along the river-bank.—1906

Tennis courts in Reservoir Park.—1906

In Reservoir Park, near picnic grounds.—1906

Dedication of formal city entrance, April 20, 1906. The columns are from the old colonial Capitol, destroyed by fire. The bases carry commemorative bronze tablets relating to the burned Capitol and to the old "Camel-back" bridge. This entrance was erected under the auspices of the Civic Club of Harrisburg, and presented to the city by the estate of Col. Henry McCormick. (See page 18)

West State Street, from Capitol. Shows central grass-plot in 120-foot street.—1906

reëlection because of the very great drain upon their time required in the three years of arduous labor, a new board was elected, of no less capable character, and under the new loan voted in 1905 is proceeding with further extensions of the sewerage system and with the rebuilding of a viaduct connecting two parts of the city.

I have mentioned the street paving which has been effected under the provisions of the loan ordinance, and which is being extended under the second loan. The organization of the street-cleaning work under the city highway department of Harrisburg is unique, in that this is probably the only city of less than 75,000 inhabitants maintaining a regular uniformed street-cleaning force, working with a high degree of efficiency. The cost is approximately $1,500 per mile per year—a very low cost for the admirable work performed.

Clean Streets.

Naturally nearest my own heart is the park proposition involved in the loan ordinance. Concerning it, I can report that the city has been transformed through the operation of the park scheme. Mr. Warren H. Manning, the same engineer who had proposed the original plan, was retained to carry it into effect. A Commission of five citizens has proceeded vigorously with the work.

To briefly recount its accomplishments, I may say that the river-front has been combined into one splendid strip of green more than a mile long, giving a superb view over the unsurpassed panorama of river, and island and mountain to the west, and affording easily reached breathing places for a vast multitude of people. Just what this means can be realized when it is stated, upon the authority of the Harrisburg Park Commission, that 368,000 people used the Riverside parks alone during the six months of 1906.

The Riverside Parks.

More than two miles of additional river-front have been secured, or are in process of being secured, by the Park Commission, so that before long the city of Harrisburg will have the unique distinction of a river front untouched by commerce or residence, maintained as a continuous park and open for the pleasure and recreation of all its citizens along not less than four miles.

This Riverside park forms an essential part of the parkway scheme which is to encircle the whole of the city of Harrisburg, with approximately eighteen miles of driveway. Of these eighteen miles, nearly one-third

An 18-mile Parkway.

have been already secured and partially opened. It is a notable evidence of the public spirit of property owners to call attention to the fact that all the property required for the parkway, which follows for the most part small streams in valleys of great beauty, but of little agricultural or residental value in themselves, has been contributed without cost to the city. While it may easily be argued that in thus permitting the establishment of a parkway, these citizens increase the value of contiguous property, it can also be shown that high prices have been exacted elsewhere.

Reservoir Park.

The small and inadequate Reservoir Park has been more than trebled in size, including now eighty-nine acres of rolling land, topped by three notable summits. Lawns, drives, tennis courts, a golf course, swings, playgrounds, picnic grounds, rest-houses and a flower-garden have made this a most attractive spot. Each summer, through the liberality of the citizens and the local traction company, a series of band concerts is maintained in a great open natural auditorium, seating 2,500 persons and providing comfortable hearing for 4,000. This park is on the line of the parkway before mentioned.

Twelfth Street Playground.

A playground of ten acres has been opened in a locality convenient to most of the city, but immediately contiguous to what was the worst slum district. A great change in the order and health of the neighborhood has followed the establishment of this playground, which includes up-to-date apparatus and a wading-pool, the latter serving as a skating pond in winter. This example has led to the beautification of business premises close by, and, indeed, all through the city the park example has caused adornment to follow.

Island Park.

The city's filtration plant was established on an island in the Susquehanna river facing the central part of the city. The southern part of that island, including some twenty acres, has recently been secured for park purposes on a long lease at a nominal rental, from the public-spirited corporation controlling it, and ball fields, a running course, and tennis courts have been established therein, to the great delight of the young people of the city. A park nursery, also established on this island, saves much money to the city.

The proposed great natural park to the north and east of the city, known in the campaign as the "Wetzel's Swamp" neighbor-

hood, was fully included in Mr. Manning's comprehensive plan. By coöperation with the Board of Public Works, and in connection with a plan for the prevention of floods in the Paxton Creek valley, a storage lake has been included with this park, now known as Wildwood Park. Fully two-thirds of the property involved has been acquired for the city, and portions of the park will be made available to the citizens during 1907. The total area to be included in Wildwood Park and Wildwood Lake approximate six hundred and fifty acres. The Parkway skirts its whole length on the east.

Wildwood Park.

During all this period of construction, the Municipal League has maintained a watchful eye upon proceedings. When a weakness was apparent in respect to paving specifications and paving performance, the ablest paving engineer of the country was brought here at the expense of the League to inspect and report. When an officious paving company attempted by questionable methods to capture most of the paving contracts, its head was sent for, interviewed, caused to see that politics could not take the place of performance, and to withdraw entirely from the field. When it appeared that the city councils, which have always capably assisted the improvement work, did not have a proper comprehension of a modern park system as a whole, the Municipal League arranged for a special trip to Boston, taking there not only the city councils but the Park Commission and the mayor, to see, under the kindly guidance of the Boston officials, the admirable Boston park system. This visit had a most wholesome effect.

The Municipal League Active.

A notable advance has been scored in city architecture, as evidenced in improved school buildings, surrounded by better open grounds. No less notable has been the introduction of some miles of grass plats, both central and at the sidewalks, decreasing the cost of paving and greatly increasing comfort. The Riverside Parks before alluded to include a beautiful walk, known as the "depressed path," and as a central feature of this river-front park there is the beautiful city entrance. This, I am informed, is the only formal city entrance in the United States. Its distinguishing features are two columns from the old colonial State Capitol, set on dignified bases and with suitable capitals, and made historically important by two bronze tablets

The City Entrance.

reciting the circumstances. This entrance was erected, through the intervention of the Civic Club, by the heirs of Colonel Henry McCormick, and given to the city at a notable formal presentation ceremony held April 20, 1906.

It can hardly be surprising that the whole face of the city of Harrisburg has been changed by this movement for improvement.

Small Increase in Taxes.

When the cost of it is inquired into, a marvel appears; for while the most favorable construction placed upon the cost proposed, in 1906, an increase in the city taxes of two mills, the effect of the improvement feeling in increasing enterprise, the further effect of a better adjusted valuation, and the city's advance along all lines, enabled the city authorities to keep house properly with an increase of but one-half mill in the tax rate for 1906. That is, the increased cost has been barely one-fourth that proposed under the most favorable conditions at the time the movement was projected. For 1907 the tax rate has been fixed at a rate one-half mill less than the 1902 promise.

During the time of the improvements here recounted, the state has been erecting a Capitol building to replace the old colonial

The New Capitol.

structure destroyed by fire February 2, 1897. That Capitol building, now completed, stands in the very center of the city, dominating it as its crown of beauty. Itself one of the most majestic and richly adorned buildings in the world, it incites the city to further effort for beautification. The all too narrow space about this great building, preventing a full appreciation of its majesty, will undoubtedly be increased in the near future by the extension of the Capitol Park.

In conclusion, I may properly call attention to the fact that there is no feeling of regret at the improvements undertaken and carried out. On the contrary, our citizens are looking forward to greater achievements. A modern sewage disposal plant; the burying of the wires which now obstruct our streets; the inclusion in the great Wildwood Park as part of a flood-protection scheme of a pleasure lake more than a mile long; the erection of a City Hall in harmony with existing structures, so that there shall be even in this small city a proper grouping of public buildings—are all in mind; and "Harrisburg, a growing city," can fairly now lay claim to being also, "Harrisburg, a live city."

WHAT WE ARE VOTING ON

(Ordinance No. 20, File of Common Council)

"That the debt of the City of Harrisburg should be increased $1,090,000 for the following purposes:

"$310,000 for the extension, improvement and filtration of the water supply;

"$365,000 for the extension and improvement of the sewerage system;

"$65,000 for the construction of a dam in the Susquehanna River to form part of the improved sewerage system;

"$250,000 for acquiring land and property for parks and for making park improvements; and

"$100,000 for the creation of a fund out of which the city may defray the cost of paving the intersections of streets hereafter authorized to be paved."

THE ONE QUESTION is the increase of the city's indebtedness for the purposes above noted. All the details belong to the Board of Public Works —Messrs. Gilbert, Stamm and Gorgas—subject to the appropriating power of the Councils. The plans supplied are only suggestions, and bind no one. They may be entirely discarded or changed in any way found best for the public good.

The issue is IMPROVEMENTS or NO IMPROVEMENTS;

A Greater Harrisburg, good to live in,

or A Dead Town, only fit to get out of!

THE OBJECTS OF THE PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS

1. **The Abatement of the Paxton Creek Nuisance.** (It is suggested to deepen the channel to prevent floods and to construct an intercepting sewer to take the drainage of half the city, thus making Paxton Creek clean and safe.)
2. **The Correction of the Defective and Dangerous Sewers of the City.** (This means the removal of all present difficulties and dangers to public health, and a great saving of money.)
3. **The Filtration of the Water Supply.** (This will remove disease germs as well as culm and clay, and make the water safe to drink as well as fit to use.)
4. **The Building of a Low Dam to Keep the Susquehanna River about Four Feet above Low-water Mark.** (This will cover the mouths of the sewers, and prevent malaria and mosquitos.)
5. **The Creation of a Park System for the City.** (This means the extension of Reservoir Park and the opening of other parks and playgrounds, to be easily reached by all the people without necessarily riding on the trolley-cars.)
6. **The Provision of a Fund for Paving Street Intersections.** When property owners petition for pavements, Councils can then provide for the intersections.

Extract from "The Harrisburg Plan" as placed in every house in the city the Saturday evening before election

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Filtration plant on Hargest's Island, in Susquehanna river, Harrisburg, Pa., Capacity, 12,000,000 gallons daily. Loan voted February, 1902; in service, October, 1905